

The importance of Consistency by Dave Wood CCC National Head Coach

When I talk about consistency I mean an athlete should be able to perform at a level reflective of their basic ability (talent??) throughout a season and season after season. When they can perform at this level and sees that perhaps the talent level is increasing.

I would state the most important aspect of being consistent is education. Young athletes must be taught and must learn what it means to train and prepare effectively.

This would include at least these following points

1. Good health
2. Good training habits
3. Good feel for themselves and how they are responding
4. A sound Yearly Training plan, that is integrated to a multi year plan
5. Psychology, including goal setting, debriefing, race planning and strategies,.
6. Good Technical skills, and what good technique is
7. A good understanding of the process of recovery
8. An acceptance that getting to a high level is a long process

I can elaborate here

Good Health. This is an area that cannot be emphasized enough. I have seen so many athletes destroy their career because of this. When athletes get colds and flu all the time their immune system gets destroyed. When athletes are injured all the time they never get proper training. I think understanding the role of nutrition, hydration, rest, and sleep go a long way to help. This is something that requires an athlete to plan their day and their week, and it requires an athlete to develop good discipline. This becomes more important when athletes get older and begin to travel and train more. It is also a process that takes awhile

Good Training Habits. Here I mean getting prepared for each training session with what ever you need to make that session successful. This would include having proper clothing, drinks, possibly some food, HR Monitor, etc. It includes understanding the goals of each training session and managing the intensity of the session (hard or easy).

Good Feel for Themselves: This is something all the very best athletes have, but it is something they have developed. They understand the need to be ready to push on hard days, the maintain on long days, and what to do to recover

The YTP: This is the athlete's way forward. It must include or have considered all current training ideas and philosophies. It must be built on the athlete's history. It must incorporate the principles of LTAD, and the CCC Roadmap. It should be designed with the athlete's goals in mind. The athlete should have feedback to be incorporated. It is much more than hours per month!!!

Psychology: The athlete must start to learn the process of goal setting, planning, debriefing, etc . These skills are critical to progress to a higher level

Technical Skills: This means the athlete is relentless at becoming technically proficient. They must be a student of good skiing. They must develop the discipline to constantly work on being a good skier.

Recovery: You can only train as hard as you can recover. Recovery includes many things from Sleep, nutrition, fluid intake, massage, etc, etc to the mental break. The athlete has to learn to park the sport when it is time to park the sport. You cannot think about skiing 24/7. This is a process that takes time to become proficient at but is worth the effort

Perspective: This is the process the athlete must go thru to become comfortable with what it takes to be good, with the time it takes to be good. It is the process of putting together the life situation they must have to hang in for the long haul.

The role of the coach in all these processes is critical. These days the flavor seems to be to have Performance enhancing teams. Perhaps they are necessary for the International level but for development an athlete needs a well educated, experienced coach that knows all of this.